The Mohegan Way

Obeying The Laws Of Nature

In the 1930s, Gladys Tantaquidgeon, Medicine Woman of the Mohegan Nation, wrote a letter to the Campfire Girls of America to congratulate them on the birthday of their organization. In that letter, Gladys included a story that illustrates the Mohegan Tribe's commitment to conservation:

Shellfish farming at Mohegan Aquaculture exemplifies the Tribe's commitment to preserving and renewing the bounty of nature.

"The Indian is inherently a worshiper of nature and holds in reverence the gifts of the Creator, which are his heritage. Long ago, we are told, the Creator gave to the Indian many things: thickly wooded forests where lived game animals and where birds nested in the trees unmolested. Rivers and lakes that abounded with fish. Wild fruits, berries and nuts were plentiful. Great herds of buffalo roamed the plains. The Indian carefully guarded those precious gifts, and wastefulness was unknown. The Indian took only what he needed for food, shelter and clothing. The animals and plants, the Indian believed, had souls the same as mankind, and it was the custom of my people to recognize the spirits of the animals and plants in their prayers of thanksgiving to the Creator. The Indian believed that so long as he obeyed the laws of Nature, there would always be an abundance of the gifts of the Creator for his use."

—from "Medicine Trail: The Life and Lessons of Gladys Tantaquidgeon"
by Melissa Jayne Fawcett, University of Arizona Press, 2000

The Mohegan commitment to preserving the natural environment is essential to our values as a tribe. For that reason, we consider conservation and responsible energy management in the initiatives we undertake. It's not always the least expensive way; but it's the right way.

"We pray for respect and love of Mother Earth because she is the foundation of human survival and we must keep her pollution-free for those who will travel after us."

For more information about the Mohegan Way,
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Good For All Of Us.

Hotel temperature controls conserve energy by activating when guests register.

Putting public safety officers on bicycles also reduces emissions.

Conservation

In constructing our hotel, we built energy conservation into every room. When rooms are unoccupied, they are heated and cooled at a minimal level. When hotel guests register, the temperature control system in their room automatically switches onto a comfortable setting. That way, no energy is wasted on empty rooms.

Vehicle Emissions

Before Mohegan Sun opened, we made a conscious decision to put our public safety patrols on bicycles instead of in cruisers. It was smart in terms of limiting carbon dioxide emissions, the primary source of the pollution that causes global warming. It also made sense in terms of public safety. The bicycle officers can move more quickly around the reservation, and are more easily approached by anyone in need.

These are only a small sample of the many ways we seek to extend our commitment to responsible environmental management. We're always looking for ways to repay Mother Earth. For example, this year, to compensate for the minimal amount of emissions from our fuel cells, we planted 100 trees in Costa Rica. What we take, we return.

"The land is given to us by the Creator to care for, not to own. If we take care of the land, the land will take care of us."

Good For The Earth.

Fuel cells provide Mohegan Sun with electricity and reduced emissions.

Christine "Micimee" Murtha, Tribal Council Corresponding Secretary and the Tribe's Environmental Liaison, says it succinctly: "The idea is to have a green reservation – as green as we can get it."

To live the philosophy of respect for Mother Earth, the Mohegan Tribe has undertaken a number of environmentally friendly initiatives. A sampling:

Fuel Cell Technology

In 2001, the Mohegan Tribe installed two 200-megawatt fuel cells, producing electrical power converted from natural gas. Fuel cells do not require combustion, so emissions are far cleaner than those created by coal-burning generators. They also emit minimal amounts of carbon dioxide, diminishing their impact on global warming. These Connecticut manufactured fuel cells have helped make the Mohegan Sun a model for the greater use of renewable energy. Plans call for installing additional fuel cells in the future, as the Tribe seeks to further reduce its impact on the environment.

Recycling

The Mohegan Tribe is proud of its record on recycling, with a success rate that is better than 97% of Connecticut's cities and towns. We recycle all paper, plastic, bottles, cans, metal and cardboard. Our food waste goes to a local pig farm, giving them a high-quality food source and enabling them to avoid the use of growth hormone enhanced grain. Hazardous materials like antifreeze, motor oil and other industrial fluids are cleaned and recycled. We even recycle the fat from our deep fryers – it's used by a rendering plant in Massachusetts in animal feed.

Red Moon, Peter Schultz, Regina Keefe and Bruce "Two Dogs" Bozsum at the Children's Conference on the Environment at the University of Victoria, BC.

Tribal Water System Helps Bring Neighbors Together

While in some parts of the country neighbors battle each other in contentious water disputes, here in Connecticut the Mohegan Tribe is bringing vision, cooperation and investment to a regional water system for Southeastern Connecticut. The Tribe has designed and engineered a system to bring water from Groton, where it is plentiful, to cities and towns that need it, like Ledyard, Preston and Montville. Under this new system, Waterford, which has been experiencing shortages, will get water that passes through Montville. Preston's water will come through Ledyard. The system does more than distribute water; it is bringing neighboring communities together for a common good.

The Mohegan Tribe led a cooperative effort to create a regional water system.
(Illustration by Susan Simler)

"The Tribe has taken the lead in addressing water concerns for the future," explains Tribal Chairman Mark F. Brown. "The idea was there, but there was no infrastructure for a regional plan that benefits everyone." Now, Brown's leadership has moved the plan forward.

Without regional cooperation, finding water solutions for the region could have cost as much as $20 million. Instead, the Tribe is investing $7.5 million the project needs to start. That amount will drop to $1.7 million as all the municipalities join the project. Brown's leadership in bringing the towns together lowered the project's cost and time it takes to completion, expected in 2004.

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